



# The Union of Revolving Loan Funds

## Colorado Coalition, Colorado

A major component of EPA's Brownfields Program is the award of cooperative agreements to states, political subdivisions, and tribes to capitalize Brownfields Revolving Loan Funds (RLFs). These entities use RLF funds to make low interest loans for cleanup activities at brownfields properties. Seven Colorado local governments have joined the state to form a coalition to create the first RLF collaborative effort in EPA's Brownfields Program. The Coalition is comprised of Commerce City, Denver, El Paso County, Englewood, Lakewood, Loveland, Westminster, and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and includes a partnership with the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA). CDPHE is the grant recipient and lead agency responsible for assisting coalition communities in carrying out site management responsibilities and CHFA serves as the fund manager responsible for allocating the \$5.1 million in cumulative RLF funds.

All cleanups financed through the cumulative fund must have previous approval from CDPHE's Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP). In addition to CDPHE and CHFA, the Colorado Coalition RLF is run by a Board of Directors comprised of representatives from each of the local government partners. The Board provides policy direction for the RLF communities and reviews all loan applications received by the Coalition. This equation has achieved great success providing loan funds across the state.

The Colorado Coalition made one of the largest RLF loans under EPA's Brownfields Program, to clean up a "greyfield." The term "greyfield" was coined in a recent study to refer to the sites composed of derelict shopping centers, or so-called "dead malls," often characterized by the vast empty asphalt parking lots that surround them.

In 2002, the Coalition issued a \$1.95 million loan to Continuum Partners LLC, a private developer, for the cleanup of the former Villa Italia Mall property in the City of Lakewood. This brownfield was a former indoor shopping mall in a blighted neighborhood approximately ten minutes from downtown Denver. Continuum Partners demolished the Villa Italia Mall, removed contaminated soil, and are currently using in-situ groundwater remediation to clean up perchloroethylene (PCE) contamination left behind from two dry cleaning companies that previously occupied a portion of the property. The new redevelopment is called Belmar, which was the historic name for this area.



*Revolving Loan Funds helped make this Colorado shopping center possible.*

## JUST THE FACTS:

- Seven Colorado local governments and the state formed the first RLF collaborative effort in the Brownfields Program. The Coalition comprises the cities of Commerce City, Denver, El Paso County, Englewood, Lakewood, Loveland, Westminster, and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and includes a partnership with the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA).
- The first loan, issued to the City of Englewood, was used to clean up a 9.4-acre former landfill and transform it into a community park with an all-star baseball field and new trail connections.
- A \$1.95 million loan was made to a private developer for the cleanup of the Villa Italia Mall property in the City of Lakewood the 19-block project will create a city center concentrated around the city's municipal buildings.

*With assistance from EPA's Brownfields Program, the Colorado Coalition is working collaboratively with many partners to clean up blighted areas in Colorado and return them to productive use. The Coalition's projects represent collaborative efforts and coordination at the federal, state, and local levels.*

In-situ remediation involves injecting nutrients and a carbon source into the groundwater via wells to facilitate the biological breakdown of PCE. Currently, all injection wells have been installed and the property is in the monitoring phase, with additional injections of nutrients occurring as needed. The groundwater treatment has been completed and the site will be monitored to assure that the treatment was successful.

Once completed, the phased Belmar redevelopment project will give Lakewood its first downtown area; a mixed-use space that will include a public plaza, a park, an outside shopping area, offices, and residential living. The 19-block project will create a city center concentrated around the city's municipal buildings. The city is estimating the project to cost of approximately \$500 million. As of fall 2005, Phases 1 and 2 of the three-phase redevelopment have been completed.



*The completed Phase 1 and 2 of the Belmar redevelopment project.*

In addition to the Belmar project, the Coalition has been able to utilize innovative partnerships to cleanup a property and create a community park that includes two new athletic fields. The Coalition's first loan was issued to the City of Englewood in 1998, for the development of Centennial Park. The \$705,041 loan was used to clean up a 9.4-acre former landfill and transform it into a community park that comprises an all-star baseball field and new trail connections. Site investigations identified elevated concentrations of heavy metals in groundwater and high levels of methane.

Originally, the property owner planned to convert the land into a waste transfer station; however, the city opposed this use, and together with the community, initiated park expansion activities. One of the highlights of this project was the addition of new athletic fields to the city's park system, one of which was funded through the Colorado Rockies' Field of Dreams program. Former Colorado Rockies' catcher Brent Mayne donated \$70,000 in seed money for the construction of a baseball field (Brent Mayne Field) at Centennial Park. The park project also created new trail connections to the South Platte River Trail system, providing kayakers access to the South Platte boat chutes and Mary Carter Greenway whitewater boating facilities. This project is significant to the communities of Englewood, Sheridan, and Littleton because it provides regional recreational amenities to residents of all three cities.

These projects exemplify a collaborative effort to remove regulatory barriers without sacrificing protection of human health and the environment, and coordination of environmental cleanup efforts at the federal, state, and local levels. The Colorado Coalition RLF has approved seven loans for \$4.9 million and one subgrant since its inception. Through the creation and use of the Colorado Coalition RLF, the communities in Colorado are successfully cleaning up blighted areas and returning them to productive use.

## **CONTACTS:**

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